A quick WHAT, WHO, WHY and HOW of working

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CAN WAYS OF WORKING
About

- Arundhati Roy

Another world, and ready to fight for it.
Walk through ligthly, with little lugguge, ready to imagine ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the
evictions.
mask making to homelessness and
together on everything from food relief and
skills and resources. Volunteers are working
challenges while sharing ideas, experiences,
community to organise around local
support ordinary people in every
As a collective, to inspire, promote and
our communities and across our city
by building relationships of solidarity within

WHY
and equal than before.
and our society more just
rebuild our communities
and we feel called to
we are all interconnected
COVID-19 reminds us that
and we aim to bridge that.
exposed by the pandemic.

divides were starkly
Existing spatial and social

growing every day!
response to COVID-19, and is
evolving community-based
in March 2020 as a rapid
Cape Town Together started

WHAT

WHO

HOW

exist in your area.
or help start a new CAN if one doesn't
associations. Anyone can join a CAN
others through existing community
of volunteers; some for the first time,
The network is made up of thousands.
We are a central group. Without the need to pass decisions by a central
problems independently and collaboratively,
relationships - taking initiative and solving
a web of personal connections and human
dynamic and creative ways. We are, primarily,
and this gives us the flexibility to work in
work. We do not identify as an organisation,
that so often accompany these ways of
hierarchies of knowledge, resources and power
making and management and we avoid
- tendency to centralise planning, decision-
hierarchical network. We work against the
wisdom. We are non-centralised and non-
we draw on our collective energy and collective

1. WE ARE A NETWORK...
environmental challenges in our society. Unjust economic, social and response that can help to transform the across the network. We aim to build a generosity and learn what is going on solidarity across CANS is an important of those living in the community, while the CANS are driven by the needs sexuality, ability, religion and nationalitiy, privilege, including class, race, gender, and across all forms of difference and value relationships of solidarity between work – it is how we build our network. We Social solidarity is the foundation of our This is a time for radical generosity.
We focus on what we CAN do in our communities. Every CAN is best placed to know what COVID-19 responses make sense in their own community. The skills, knowledge and resources already exist to tackle the challenges we face and where we collaborate with others we do so in ways that serve to strengthen the CANS without making them dependent on external support.
Collective action is powerful! Everyone can collaborate with each other and contribute. In many communities, there are structures and organisations that we have gifts and experiences that we can share. The communities are all experimenters and guides, while others disruptors and warriors, whilst others are caretakers or healers. Some are teachers, and builders, others are storytellers, and some others are woven into the community. Everyone has something to contribute in our collective efforts without duplicating efforts.
to this new and difficult moment.

address these issues, knowing that we are all learning how to
discriminate and we are generous and courageous in how we
excluded. We do not tolerate any form of discrimination or
whose voices are being heard and whose voices are missed or
inequalities that exist within our groups, and to be aware of
valued. We strive to be conscious at all times of the power
of data or technology, language, or because a voice is not
initiatives and conversations - whether it be because of a lack
reasons people do not or are not able to participate in
strive to be inclusive of everyone. We are mindful of the many
We value a diversity of experiences and points of view and we
We need to build a culture of "calling in", not "calling out".

and try to flatten hierarchies...

5. We work inclusively
communication, good faith and genuine connection. Integrity, we move at the speed of trust, throught ourselves to take decisions with transparency and then making an immediate decision. We trust taking time to understand this complex process and that sometimes there is value idea or a direction taken. We are aware that this is a consensus means nobody strongly disagrees with on everyone has to agree with everything – "finding incorporate everyone’s views and compromise. Not debate, but some will. In this case we seek to decisions as a collective, Not every idea will need and deliberated so that we can make the best nurturing these! We allow for ideas to be discussed relationships are key and we need to prioritize of TRUST. 6. We move at the speed
styles of leadership. Rather than resorting to patriarchal or domineering collectivism, which understands the importance of acting in the interest of the wider group, by facilitating confidence, agility and heroic leadership, which emerges in this network, especially post-forms of leadership that stutter, we value the varied and dynamic co-ordination that stimulates action. We build collective coherence through making people carefully and move slowly and carefully to choose to be done at a slower pace, and for the people who choose to go alone. At the same time, we allow space for the things that are learn by doing, keeping track of our mistakes and improving as we go along. We know that we have to act quickly, and that we will have to do. We encourage initiatives, The best way of building connections is by taking action. This does not necessarily mean doing everything at once or...
allows us to be agile and responsive.
and how we create the slack in the system that
out - this is about collective care (not only self care)
and don’t burn in the world through our local actions. We also need
more carefully as we respond to what is happening
together. Taking time to reflect allows us to listen
and remember that we are moving through this
hoped for possibilities that COVID-19 pandemic offers,
also need to check in with each other, focus on the
times. When we can, we take time to breath, we
the uncertainty and immense pressure of these
emotional and spiritual well-being, as we recognise
All of us need to look after our mental health,

for each other...

we respond rapidly while CARING
8. WE SUSTAIN ENERGY.
We work in ways that allow us to stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus. We take all times. We take responsibility for this freely and use our common sense at all. We share ideas and resources for doing so consistently updating our understanding of how this virus spreads and the steps we can take to protect ourselves and our communities. As we learn more and guidance changes, we adapt our behaviour and share what we know.

9. We need to do this work while not spreading COVID-19.
10. We share good information.

We empower each other with accurate and verifiable information. We appreciate the value of accurate information at a time when there is so much fake news, sensationalism, bad advice, and poor-quality information. This can cause panic and fear and can even be deadly. The network is a good place to find information that is verifiable and useful from official sources. We try to calm and reassure each other with the information we share.
Some Useful Links

- What is a CAN Pocket Guide (for mobile)
- Eastern Cape Together
- Gauteng Together
- Sign Up & Join
- Start Organizing
- CAN Directory
- Cape Town Together Facebook Page
- Cape Town Together Website